

LETTER

Recently sent through the Edinburgh Post Office to "the Rev. J. B. M'Crea, Dublin," accusing him of "calumny" and "misrepresentation" in his public statements in Portobello, having, in a gratuitous epistle, been acknowledged by a "Captain D. CHISHOLM, Rosefield Avenue, Portobello," a correspondence of days passed between the two gentlemen, in which Mr. M'Crea requested an open accusation upon the statements made by him. An abrupt termination of the correspondence having taken place, (at the instance of Mr. CHISHOLM's priest, it is presumed) M'Crea has no alternative, in justice to all parties, but to give through the Press his "returned" Letter to the last from CHISHOLM, which is done with every feeling of personal regard for that gentleman.

PORTOBELLO, August 14, 1838.

DEAR SIR,

At the risk of my Letter being "returned unopened," by a gentleman who has erewhile deemed that second thoughts are best, I venture a rejoinder to your singular manner of refusing my statements, in your *third* "final communication" of yesterday. It is not becoming in an old soldier, Sir, to begin an assault, and to run away from an unrouted enemy, claiming victory. The gallant 42d did not so at Quatre Bras. For one, Sir, who occupies the important station which I now find you have long held as the anonymous champion of Popery in Portobello, it is rather ignoble to take refuge in the pretext of my "abstruse reasoning," when silenced upon matters of fact; and to acknowledge yourself unable to maintain a controversy with one whom you gratuitously undertook to convict of error and misrepresentation. You impeached my "veracity;" you accused me of "calumny;" you denounced as "bigots" those Protestants "from many of whom," you say, "you have received kindness, and from all of whom civilities," because in their Parish Church they were present to hear me preach what I believe to be truth, and to relate what I know to be facts. You described as "firebrands," not only such "itinerant trampers" and "raving maniacs" as myself, but all who "from that pulpit from time to time" state their reasons for protesting against the Popish apostacy, and who warn their fellow sinners against being entangled in the meshes of its pompous and seductive rites. And when your sinister and concealed assaults are detected, and your bold allegations are openly met,—when an opportunity is offered you, with whatever reinforcements you may be able to obtain, to oppugn before the world my statements and propositions,—you shrink away from the contest you have rashly and ungenerously provoked. This is truly illustrating your own military figure of "an ignorant soldier bringing fire upon the camp." Is it thus, dear Sir, you demonstrate the solid grounds of that faith to which you are striving, by a systematic secret correspondence, to convert others? Is this the exemplification of that charity which prompts your deprecation of "bigotry," and starts with horror at the mention of "idolatry and superstition," in application to a system that dictates to the wisdom, and repudiates the written word, of God; and that substitutes for the truth of the gospel lying legends and filthy fables? You take offence at supposed statements in a discourse which your enlightened mind and vigorous reason did not trust themselves to hear; and in which there was the most careful abstinence from what might be painful to any; and are personally opprobrious toward one who has given you no manner of cause. With the inconsistency of a fiery zealot, you commence a controversy which, you declare, "can be of no use;" you affect to reason, whilst avowing that "human reason is of no avail in religious inquiry;" and would conclude a controversy, in which you are altogether a volunteer, by an implication of obtrusiveness, and an anxiety to make "proselytes of Papists," in him with whom you provoked the correspondence!

Now, dear Sir, permit me to tell you, I nowhere read, in the Word of God, that Popery is to be destroyed by the general conversion of its members. Identifying it with that great Babylon which is to fall as suddenly and absolutely as a millstone cast into the sea by an angel's arm, and whose plagues are to come at the time when she has revived from deep depression, and is exulting again in greatness and grandeur; you are much astray in your sneering allusion to my "pious vocation of making proselytes of Papists." I read that God has his elect ones, who have been lured into this spiritual Sodom, or born there; that these shall come out from her, that they may escape the fate which is appointed her, for her adulteries and her drunkenness,—in the worship of animals, the veneration of images, and a thousand carnal superstitions. Our preachings, therefore, are mainly directed to prevent from the fascinations and to recover from the corruptions of Popery, the chosen of the Lord, before the doom of the meretricious queen arrives. Now, because you avow that you were once a Protestant, and because, I understand, you are a father of children, I hope you and yours are yet of the remnant of grace. I ask you, then, dear Sir, will you venture your soul to immortality on such a flimsy raft as those vain traditions of a self-created tribunal, that dare not permit its pretensions to be tested by the simple word of God? Will you persist in your alienation from a religion that invites your examination of its doctrines by the revealed mind of the Most High? Will you continue to despise those Ministers of Grace, who affect no high-sounding words of vanity, about succession, and supremacy,

and infallibility, tell you to inquire, "How is it written?" (Mark xi. 17.) "be ye of us, as we are of Christ;" (1 Cor. xi. 1.) "behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sins of the world;" (John i. 29.) and "beside there is no Saviour," (Matt. i. 21.—Isaiah xliii. 11.) "no Mediator," (1 Tim. ii. 5.) "no Advocate with the Father," (1 John ii. 1.)

If you doubt these men of God, in a calm and candid spirit, for mutual exposure, produce your strong arguments, and your strongest advocates. We are to give a reason for the hope that is in us, and the fears we have.

From the terms of your letter, I am inclined to think that you are neither able nor go far into an argument. Assertions and assumptions, when these mislection or a prejudice, are quite enough for a man who, "ignorant of righteousness, goeth about to establish his own righteousness, and will not submit himself to the righteousness of God," (Rom. x. 3.) But this, my friend, will not do. Having left your first faith, Sir, you must be able to tell at that day, that you did your fathers' faith justice by inquiring its nature and its claims. You know, in your conscience, you familiarised yourself with that Book, whose only infallible and immutable truths are the standard and authority of Protestantism. Yet you have made yourself the slave of an abomination that has usurped your Maker's, that affects the Redeemer's attributes, and that restricts the Spirit; and you take for granted, on the bare assertion of an arrogant self-created tribunal, what it is in your power to ascertain. I must repeat my pity for your criminal temerity. Once again, you, in our blessed Saviour's own words, "Search the Scriptures," (v. 39.) "they are able," says an inspired apostle, "to make you to salvation;" (2 Tim. iii. 15.) which neither Augustine, nor Vos Challoner, nor any, nor all the wisest, and best, and boldest of men tended to.

At all events of this correspondence, I have no doubt, will be for good. It will not it have the effect of inducing you to reconsider your ways, and to dish the false hope that your insidious warfare against the faith and of your Protestant neighbours can be any longer carried on. Henceforth be above board, in your endeavours to promote Popery in Portobello, if you would vainly strive to make merit for your soul in it. You must send no more anonymous letters through the Edinburgh Post Office, to the Parish Minister, to your half-pay brethren, to your fair friends, or to Ministers of the Lord Jesus who occasionally expose the mass, the blasphemy of the wafer god, the idolatry of savage worship, the beastliness of relicry, the crime-concocting and lying confessional. No, no. The people of Portobello, moreover learn, with what inextinguishable hatred the principles and the of their holy religion are regarded by their Popish neighbours, when they are properly "exercising civility and kindness," and whose suppositions some few infatuated Protestants licentiously patronise and. They will thus, too, it may be hoped, be confirmed in their avowed secret and persevering efforts which are made by the idolaters to deepen and extend their pernicious influence, wheresoever they find an entrance. And they will be enabled, should any future anonymous letters be made upon their religious liberties, to trace the quarter whence such malevolent zeal proceed.

I am too weak in the tactique of Popish controversy to think that you have been whoed, in your tirades against Protestant heresy, and high-sounding claimst of iniquity. Permit me, therefore, to make you the vehicle of compliments to the "reverend father" whose amanuensis you have been in your communications; and to convey to him my avowed respect and to meet with him and as many priests of Romanism as he may be pleased with him, for discussion of the propositions contained in my paper. With all sincerity praying that God will give you and your brethren to the acknowledging of his truth,

I am, Sir,

Your obedient Servant in Christ,

J. B. M'CREA.

Captain D. &c. &c.
Rosefield Avenue,
Portobello.

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